Gretchen Und Me Go Oud.

BY CARL PRETZEL.

Dook der pabers, shudge, und write dis ting aboud,
Mine hause he vas so crazy on ackound Gretchen und me go oud;
For dwendy years already we lif so habby like der deuce,
But now I dink ids bessér ven we vas lockt to-gedder loose.

Dem marriage tings makes a man und woman ONE you see,
But der tuyfel mineself he dond could told vhich vas der ONE to be;
I dook dot vooman for besser, vell, she dooks me for vorser, too,
We lofed der odder blaindy vell, dot vas der ting to do.

She dond vas pooty for nice, shudge, but she vas bully for shtrong,
Und ofer I hadnd peliefed id, I dond vood seen some wrong;
So I shbeaks mit Gretchen a leedle times, und she vas shbeak mit me,
Und we make us our segloosions oop dot we nefer could degree.

Who ish der matter, vot? py shinks, I dond could said,
Der long years behindt, for dis, go blaindy, habby shped,
But, odder of a somehow, dot ting vay yoost blaid out,
Mine frow got a flirdation of der heart so vorser like der gout.

Yah, yah, dats so, und I dells you dis ting for drue,
Dem vimmems, efery one, could yoost make fool mit you;
Dhere hearts got changes like der moon, vay ub py dot shky,
Und efery time vas got a man in dot, how up vas dot for high?

Shure ting, shudge, blease make down vat I shbeaks mit you,
Mine frow vas a pooty mean voomans in some tings, und meaner in odders too;
I only finds me some oxcendricks out yoost a cubble weeks or dhree,
Und I dells you vat it is, shudge, dots who ish der reason mit me.

Dond look of me mit dot tone of voice, but make down yoost vat I say,
I vants me leckt out fon Gretchen, und dot, too, right avay;
So! you vant to found you out who vas der reason mit das,
Vell, shudge, dot vas a coorious ting, but you know how vourself it vas.

Some odder feller vas got him the lo of mine Gretchen now,
Vell, he vas got mine sympady, und she could been his frow,
Der olt lofe vas all go died, dem hearts vas colt like ledt,
Und it vas vy who ish der reason dis ting vas all go dedt.

But dots der vay, und der more you lif der longer you find it out,
Der oxcendricks of dem vimmens vood make you lafe und showd,
But dot makes me notting tifference, I dond vill cry und fret,
I yoost dink me, dhere vas yoost so good fish in der vasser as dond got pulled out yet.

THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF MY FRIEND BROWNE.

From Harper's Magazine.

How bitterly cold it was in New York on the evening of the 4th of February, 1871! I was sitting in front of a snug coal fire in my cozy little library in Washington Square. I am somewhat inclined to be what is called a book-worm: I love with my whole heart whatever is old, quaint, and musty in the way of books. They are fascinating to me in proportion as they are ancient, and possessed of that peculiar smell characteristic of antiquated bindings and worm-eaten paper. What other merits they may possess is a matter of indifference to me. To be acceptable they must be old.

On this especial evening my happiness was complete. During the day I had determined to brave the winter wind in search of some new antiquity of literature—something that should be exceptionally ragged, obscure, and aromatic. Accordingly I betook myself to my favorite resort in such emergencies—the old second-hand bookstore in Ann street, and, after ransacking about for a while, I hit upon what seemed to be a number of old, decayed letters bound up together, and protected by a time-worn leather cover.

Here was a prize indeed! With trembling eagerness I inquired the price, and felt offended almost at being told it was ten cents! Willingly would I have given a hundred times as much, had it been asked. But I reflected that swine were always prone to trample upon pearls, and paid my ten cents in silence. Then, placing my purchase carefully in my innermost breast pocket, I hurried homeward through the biting wind.

Supper over, I ensconced myself in my big easy-chair, and prepared for a campaign into the realms of antiquity. My centre, as already hinted, was protected by a glowing fire, my right flank defended by my last half bottle of rare old port wine, my left wing strengthened by a time-honored pipe of fragrant Latakia, and my rear brought up by a judicious arrangement of cushions and springs. Every thing being ready, I drew forth my precious budget, and the campaign began.

After a little general skirmishing and reconnoitering, in which long practice and experience had rendered me an adept, I began to gain an insight into what had at first glance appeared somewhat involved. The papers (consisting of copies of letters and extracts from a journal) contained a story of three individuals—two men and a woman—who lived about a hundred and fifty years ago. One peculiar circumstance was noticeable which considerably added to the obscurity of this tale—all the proper names had been omitted. A blank space was left for each one. Even the person (a friend, apparently, of the chief actor in the drama) who had copied and arranged the original letters and papers was as nameless as the rest. But by dint of inserting initials in these blank spaces, and noting down here an event and there a date, I gradually arrived at a comprehension of the main points of the story, which (for I shall resist the temptation to transcribe it in the original words) ran somewhat as follows:

Early in the last century a man, M——, was residing in the vicinity of what was then the flourishing town of New York. He was an enterprising and successful young farmer, who, barring the fact that he was an orphan and unmarried, wanted nothing to complete his felicity. It seems probable that the very fact of his having so little to desire put it into his head that he needed a wife—some one to take charge of his household affairs, receive him with a kiss and smile on his return from the day's work, and bear him children who should transmit his name to posterity. Such a one he believed himself to have found in the person of Miss H——, a young lady belonging to one of the best families in the neighborhood. The parents, well-to-do people, readily gave their consent to the young farmer's suit; she herself seemed to favor him and reciprocate his affection, and everything seemed to prophesy a speedy and happy marriage.

At this point B—— made his appearance on the scene. He was at this time a lawyer of fair standing and repute—young, good-looking, and, for those days, well versed in the arts and usages of polite society. Retained as counsel by the H—— family in a lawsuit, on its termination in their favor he gradually advanced from the position of legal adviser to that of a trusty and intimate friend; and in the heart of one at least in the family he seems to have stood higher still.

One morning M—— came down to New York, went to the jeweler's, and bought a handsome gold ring, which he purposed presenting to his mistress as a pledge of their approaching union. But that union was destined never to take place. On reaching her house he found every thing in wild confusion: the young lady had eloped the night previous with the traitor B——, and no one knew whither. M—— returned to his farm, moody and sullen, and from that hour was an altered man. The ring which the falsehood of Miss H—— had defrauded of its original purpose he wore always thereafter around his neck and next his heart; and surely, if there be poison in the evil passions and unhallowed emotions of the human soul, we can almost believe them to have hardened into the gold and crystallized into the gems of that engagement-ring!

Meanwhile B—— and his wife found little difficulty in obtaining the forgiveness and favor of the H—— family; and at the decease of the old people they inherited half the estate, the remainder going to an only son, at that time absent in Europe. M——, however, kept entirely aloof from them until the time of his death; but shortly before that event he sent to B—— a letter professing forgiveness and a desire for reconciliation, and inclosing the engagement-ring as a pledge thereof. But, for whatever reason made, this pledge seems to have been insincere; for of the same date is an extract from M——'s journal containing these words:

"Being nowe sicke past hope of recoverie, I doe herebye declare my ondyinge Hatred toward B——, himselfe and his posteritie forever; and I pray God that my Revenge be fulfilled to the Uttermoste—yea, at the Perill of mine own Soule! Amen."

These words, dreadful in any case, but doubly so as coming from a dying man, closed the collection. A note, written apparently by S——, the compiler, added that M—— had been buried in Trinity Churchyard, and that the tombstone above him bore this inscription:

"In memory of —— M——,
Who died February 6, 1771.
Requiescat in pace."

I laid down the manuscript, poured out a glass of wine, and sipped and pondered. The omission of all the names puzzled me. What object could the papers have been collected for, unless to record a vow of vengeance, and the causes which led to and justified it? Yet, without the names, was it not void of all significance? True, the omission had probably greatly increased the chances of the manuscript's being preserved through so many years; but preservation at the expense of identification seems objectless. On the other hand, was it likely that M——, at the moment of dissolution, would have prayed for vengeance on his enemy, even at peril of his own soul, and have caused the prayer to be written down, without any purpose whatever? Decidedly not! How he had intended or expected his revenge to be accomplished was beyond my comprehension; perhaps he deemed the ring a sort of talisman, enabling his disembodied spirit to haunt the wearer. I finished my glass of port and set it down. A little wine always makes me imaginative!

While debating whether to light a fresh pipe or my bedroom candle, a loud ring at the door bell settled the question for me. "Who the deuce can be coming here at this time of night!" I grunted, rubbing my eyes and yawning. A knock at the door heralded the entrance of my friend Browne. I had not seen him for a week or two, but he could not have changed more in as many years. I was quite startled at his appearance.

"Good Heavens, Browne!" I exclaimed. "Why, you look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

Browne started and looked at me for a moment; then he dropped into my easy-chair (from which I had incautiously risen to give him welcome), leaned his elbows on his knees and his head on his hands, gazed gloomily into the fire for a few moments, and then said, in a low, awe-struck voice, very different from his usual brisk, lively tone:

"And so I have Simpson!"

I was completely unnerved. Until this evening I had known Browne as a rising young barrister, clever, sensible, and always in good spirits. The idea of such a man as he coming in suddenly and deliberately at that hour of the night and solemnly asserting that he had seen a ghost, was enough to unnerve any body. I was at a loss what to say, and therefore said the very last thing I meant to: I asked him to have a glass of wine!

Browne, without a word, filled my glass to the brim, drained it, filled it again, and drained *that*, looking all the while as if he were going to be hanged. But I began to look rather serious myself then.

"Simpson," said Browne, abstractedly again gazing into the fire, "I sha'n't blame you for being incredulous. I should have been myself—if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes!"

I began to feel a little nervous, I think. Browne was a larger man than I, and if, as I believed, his mind was affected, he might become violent at any moment. I felt that the wisest plan would be to humor him.

"Of course," I said, "that alters the case."

Again Browne fixed his eyes on me and nodded silently. How pale and strange he looked! Again he took the bottle, filled the glass and drained it. Positively it was becoming unpleasant. Wine was the worst thing for one in his condition, and—there were not more than three glassfuls left in the bottle.

"Don't you think," I began, "that you'd better"—

"I will," exclaimed Browne, abruptly; "and as briefly as possible. It happened in this way: You knew I was engaged to Miss Hammill. Well, I went down there the other day to give her the engagement ring. It was a queer, old-fashioned thing that I found in a secret drawer of a desk that had belonged to some great-great-grandfather of mine, but handsome enough for all that. I put it on her finger, and told her how it had been in our family a hundred years for all I knew, but that she was the first who'd ever worn it. Oh, how sweet and lovely she looked as she put her hands in mine, and promised me that as long as she lived she would remain true to the giver of that ring! And yet, even as she spoke the words, it seemed to me she shuddered convulsively and turned pale; and at the same moment I felt a sudden chill and horror at my own heart. But we both shook it off, whatever it was, and parted as usual, except that when I kissed her I could not be sure whether I had really touched her lips or not."

"I must say, Browne," remarked I, for my nervousness was beginning to pass off, and I felt sleepy and in no degree inclined to listen to a lover's rhapsodies, "I don't see any thing in all this to warrant you in—"

I did not finish my protest; I was too much engaged in watching Browne fill and drain another glass of my port. I resolved not to interrupt him again.

"When I called the next evening," continued he, "I noticed a change in her at once. I know not how to describe it. It was not so much that she was cold to me, as that she seemed chilled herself. Her affections, her emotions, appeared in a manner paralyzed. She seemed to elude my grasp, so to speak; I couldn't reach her; I felt as if some nameless, impalpable, but insurmountable barrier had grown up between us since the day before. And several times I turned around, under the impression that somebody else was in the room. Her eyes wore a kind of sad, hopeless, distant expression, as if she felt that some one or something were taking her away from me. Yet still she wore the ring on which she had sworn to be true to the giver; but I saw her look at it once, and it may have been my fancy, but I thought she shivered, and grew even paler than before."

"Nothing but a headache on her part, and indigestion on yours, depend upon it," growled I, forgetting my resolution. But Browne didn't take any wine this time. He only sighed heavily and shook his head.

"The next day—yesterday," he went on, "I resolved to call early, take her out to walk, and trust to open air and exercise to set everything right; for I could not, would not, believe that my impressions of the day before had been anything but a morbid fancy. I felt quite reinspirited, and walked rapidly along up Fifth avenue toward her house. She lives, you know, corner of the avenue and Fifty-first street. I had reached Forty-second street, when I caught sight of her about a block ahead of me, and walking slowly in the same direction. She walked as if her life were ebbing away from her at every step; there was an indescribable droop and langour about her, so different from her usual springy step, and bright, cheerful manner. But I hardly more than noticed her; for, walking by her side, apparently talking to her, I saw, as plainly as I now see you," said Browne, raising himself to an upright position in his chair, and looking fixedly at me, "I saw—It!"

"'It!' Why, what on earth do you mean, Browne?" cried I, feeling cold chills run down my back and creep into the calves of my legs.

"The stout, burly figure of a man, with a high-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, and masses of rusty hair falling on its shoulders. It was clad in a cloak of dusky gray, and wore knee-breeches and stockings of the same color. It stalked along the pavement in clumsy high-heeled shoes, in a manner that would have been ridiculous, had I been in any mood for laughing."

"I should have felt in a mood to kick him into the street!" declared I, valiantly. But there was something in Browne's manner that made me a little doubtful whether I would have done so, after all. He continued, without heeding my interruption:

"It struck me as especially strange that, notwithstanding the great peculiarity of the figure's dress, manner, and general appearance, and though it was broad daylight and the avenue well filled, no one seemed to notice or even see It. Even Miss Hammill, I fancied, did not realize its presence, though she was certainly in some way impressed by It. She never looked at or appeared otherwise conscious of It than as hearing, or rather feeling, what It said. Occasionally she would wince or shrink, as if its words were blows and stabs; and at such times the figure would appear vastly amused, throwing back its head, raising its hands, and contorting its burly form, as if indulging in an immoderate fit of laughter.

"When I came up with Miss Hammill, I was only conscious of a subtile influence in the air. I felt again that mysterious chill of horror at my heart; and though I was walking beside her, and her arm was in mine, she seemed immeasurable miles away."

Browne paused and drew a deep breath. As for me, I felt the cold chills worse than ever. I poured out a glass of wine with trembling hand and drank it hurriedly. It was really a very cold night!

"Under such circumstances," continued Browne, "it was not strange that our greeting was quiet, almost formal. I knew she was aware of an evil presence, as well as I. Could she have been separated from herself, she might have seen It; as it was, that was reserved for me only. But we both knew that, even at that moment, It was there—between us, around us, exerting some malignant spell over us, to separate, perhaps destroy us. And why should It have power to injure us thus? Had she not sworn on the ring to be true till death to the giver. Was not I the giver? Yet she was lost to me, and I could feel the ring upon her finger, as her hand rested in my arm; it seemed to burn and scar my flesh, as if it had been heated in hell fire.

"So we walked onward, pretty much in silence, and soon reached her house. I bade her farewell on the door-step, for I had no heart to enter, even had she invited me. 'You have been alone all day?' I asked her, as I turned to go. 'All alone,' replied she, in a sad, far-away voice. 'I'm always alone now, except for my thoughts;' and then she shivered, and shrank into herself, as it were from a stab. I left her standing there, and turning as I reached the end of the block, she stood there still; but oh, horror! by her side stood again that gloomy, fantastic shape, with high-crowned hat and dusty cloak, tossing its arms about, and actually capering with ghastly jollity! As I gazed, horror-stricken, the door opened, and she passed in and disappeared; and the mysterious figure, turning toward me, took off its hat with a flourish, and made me a low mock obeisance; then, with a parting wave of the hand, It stalked in after her. I knew that It and I would meet again; but something in my heart told me that I had seen the last of Alice Hammill.

"After I reached home, I found that my recollection of the weird figure, though vivid enough, seemed more like the memory of a dream than of a reality. Having escaped from its immediate influence, I persuaded myself it must be some extraordinary mental or optical delusion: and I went to bed, resolved to see whether a good night's rest would not aid in dispelling it.

"I woke this morning feeling fresh and strong, and determined to see Miss Hammill at once, tell her all my fears and fancies, and prove to myself and her that it was all a wretched delusion. So, having eaten a hearty breakfast at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, I set off, and in a quarter of an hour stood on the door-step. I rang the bell, and the servant appeared.

"'I want to see Miss Hammill. Is she in?'

"'Yes, sir,' returned the man; 'but she's very bad with the headache, and can't see no one. The doctor says as how she's out of her head, sir.'

"'Do you mean to say she's insane?' cried I, with a terrible throb of my heart.

"'Not just that, sir,' replied he; 'but he says she must be kept quite quiet, sir, for several days; and, more especially, not see any one she cared for, sir.'

"I turned away, sick at heart, and at that moment I felt again that nameless, creeping chill, as if some unholy thing had brushed past me. Impelled by a dark foreboding, I looked down the street, and there, standing clearly defined in the crisp winter sunlight, I saw the Thing again."

"What! this very morning?" gasped I, half expecting to see the grisly phantom rise up between us. "Oh, not this very morning, Browne?" But it was no use.

"This morning," repeated Browne, "about eleven o'clock. It stood there beckoning to me impatiently, as if to follow It. It stamped its foot imperiously, and pointed down the avenue. And all at once a wild passion took possession of me. There stood the Thing that had destroyed my happiness, blighted my love, perhaps purposed to deprive me of life itself. My whole soul rose up in hatred and defiance. I burned to rush after It and grapple with It, though death should be the forfeit of the struggle. I did not care for death, if I might have revenge. And there It still stood, beckoning to me. I sprang down the steps, and then a ghastly chase began."

"Good gracious, Browne!" exclaimed I, piteously; "you don't mean to say you ran after It?" But he did not hear me—I don't think he knew I was in the room—so absorbed was he in the recollection of his dreadful adventure.

"The figure stalked on in front of me," said he, "with long, easy strides, once in a while cutting the most grotesque capers, flinging out its legs, and flourishing its arms abroad. It was always about sixty yards ahead, and I found it impossible to lessen the distance. But the faster I walked, the better pleased It seemed to be, skipping with frantic glee along the frozen pavements, and ever and anon half turning round to motion me onward still more rapidly. Stop I could not: I was drawn onward by an irresistible power that no will of mine could modify or overcome. But I had no desire to pause; my own heart drove me like a goad.

"On we rushed! Canal street was passed; the City Hall was left behind; and at last the railing of Trinity Church yard appeared, with the clustering groups of time-worn grave-stones behind it. And then the strain that had been drawing me onward ceased at once, like the snapping of a cord, and I realized for the first time how weak and exhausted I was. But still I staggered onward: I would see the end, though already half suspecting what it was to be.

"I reached the gate of the grave-yard and looked through the bars into the enclosure; and there, sitting on a gray, crumbling head stone, leaning with its head on its hands and its elbows on its knees, I saw It for the last time. It looked at me with an awful leer; a sombre shadow fell about It, which the cheerful sunshine could not penetrate; but the eyes of the mysterious figure emitted a dusky, phosphorescent glare, illuminating its features with a pale, unnatural light. The face was that of a corpse already mouldering into its native earth, and as I looked It seemed gradually to crumble away; the shadow grew duskier, until only the phosphorescent gleam was visible; then too that faded, an icy gust swept through the church-yard, and I heard the clock strike noon."

As Browne concluded he sank back in a chair, and began to shiver as if in an ague fit. At such a moment all personal considerations give way to the exigencies and impulses of the moment. I poured out the last glass of wine in the bottle, and myself forced it down his throat. Anything was better than to see him thus; and he had said that the presence of the ghost always produced a shuddering! But I was resolved to believe my friend insane, or dying, or anything else, in preference to putting faith in the awful vision he believed himself to have seen.

"Come, come, Browne, you're sick, and that's the whole difficulty," asserted I, stoutly. "Stay with me to-night, and if you aren't better to-morrow, we'll have the doctor here."

The wine seemed partially to have restored Browne's nerve. He sat up and gazed at me with a dead, hopeless expression in his eyes, that did not look much like improvement. He shook his head when I repeated the invitation.

"No, no," said he; "I must be off. I shall leave here next Monday, and shall never come back. Alice is dead—to me, at all events. Here," he added, handing me a card—"there's the inscription on the grave-stone: I copied it down after— And here's an old piece of paper, in which I found the ring folded up. It has some writing on it, I believe, and may explain something: you're good at that sort of thing. Good night!" And before I could speak again he was gone, and I saw him no more. On the card was written:

"In memory of THOMAS MURRAY,
Who died February 6, 1771.
Requiescat in pace.

"Rather a satire on the old fellow, that 'requiescat in pace,'" commented I—"that is if Browne *should* turn out to be a lunatic!" The paper he had given me was old and yellow, and the writing on it appeared too illegible to puzzle out that night. So, resolved to see him the next day, and talk it all over in a sober and sensible way, I yawned sleepily and retired.

That night I had a very vivid dream, in which the marvelous story related to me by Browne was in some way mixed up with the old manuscript I had purchased in Ann street. I imagined that all the blank spaces were filled out, and with the names of Browne, Alice Hammill, and Thomas Murray, I myself figuring as the copier and compiler of the whole.

With the first light of day I sprang out of bed, the influence of my dream still strong upon me, and rushed into my study after the manuscript. There it lay on the top shelf of my book-case, where I had placed it the night before; but a jar of some chemical liquid, which I remembered to have seen standing around ever since I was a boy, and which I had been told was an heir-loom in our family for many generations, had fallen over on it and broken, and the liquid had run out and deluged the manuscript completely. With a sigh for the sad fate of the jar, I took down the papers and opened them.

The sight that met my eyes made me feel as if the roots of my hair were alive and moving! All the blanks were filled up with names, written in a pale, reddish ink; and they were all exactly as I had dreamed they were. Thomas Murray was the young farmer whose life had been blighted by the lawyer, who was none other than Brown himself! while the lady who had caused all the trouble was Alice Hammill! And—yes! I was there too! My name was signed to the note appended to Thomas Murray's prayer for vengeance—"John Simpson" in full!

"Now how the deuce," soliloquized I, "did those names get written down there? They certainly weren't there yesterday. Ah! here's one only half written! How's that? Ah!" I exclaimed, drawing a long breath of relief, "I see now! Sympathetic writing, by George! and it was the old jar of chemicals brought it out!"

Such was the fact. One of the names, written near a corner of the paper, had partially escaped being wetted by the liquid in the jar, and that part which had escaped remained invisible, while the rest presented the same pale, reddish inge as the others. In this, likewise, I saw the explanation of the existence of the jar in our family during so many years. Doubtless my old ancestor, John Simpson, when he wrote the names in sympathetic ink, had provided himself with the reagent to be used when needed; and the occasion not arising with his own life, it had passed down from one generation to another, until all remembrance of its original purpose had been lost: fortunately, however, it had not been itself so forgetful, but had sacrificed itself to duty precisely at the proper time.

This turn of affairs, though decidedly exciting, substantiated my friend Browne's story too completely to be altogether pleasant. Comparing his copy of the tombstone inscription with that in the manuscript, I found them word for word identical. I next bethought myself of the piece of paper which Browne had found with the ring. On examining it I discovered it to be neither more nor less than the original of Murray's letter to Browne, professing reconciliation! Really, things were becoming disagreeably clear.

The result of my meditations was that I had better hunt up Browne, tell him all I had discovered, and consult with him on its significance and importance. The connection of the characters in the drama of a hundred years ago with those of to-day was fully established. The dreadful prayer for vengeance made by the dying Murray had evidently been granted—at the peril of his own soul, I could not doubt—but still granted. Only one mystery still awaited solution: why had the retribution come so late? why had it been reserved for my friend and the woman he loved to expiate the crimes of their long-buried ancestors?

Here the incident of the ring recurred to my mind. I remembered having idly speculated on the possibility of its being a talisman whereby the spirit of its owner might be enabled to persecute the wearer of it; and looking at the matter in the new light I had obtained, it seemed not unfeasible. In his dying moments Murray had sent this ring, encrusted with the hate and passion of all the years of his blighted life, to the man who had ruined him. Doubtless he had believed that if he or any of his race were to accept and wear it, it would have power, if any thing could, to infuse into their hearts and souls some of the misery and poison which had been exhaled into it by his. Apparently it had been laid aside and forgotten until discovered by my friend; and Alice Hammill, the descendant of that family by the son mentioned as being absent in Europe, had received as a pledge of betrothal the greatest curse which it was possible to bring upon her. Acting upon her delicate and sensitive nature, the ring had distilled its morbid poison to the best advantage, paralyzing her with the ghastly shadow of the crime which had mouldered unavenged throughout a century. And Browne, by virtue of his love for her, had come in also for his share of the punishment so long deferred. Their souls had been united, and the same baleful influence that had poisoned her, had exercised its influence on him also. He had made her swear fealty to the giver of the ring; but was he the real giver? was it not rather the gift of the terrible phantom which had haunted them? and did not that oath give It the power to do so? For haunted beyond a doubt they were; whether by the actual semblance of a disembodied spirit, or by the fantasy of a diseased mind and imagination, made little difference; the effect was the same; and until we attain to a far more lucid theory for such mysteries than we possess at present, we must accept the old explanation as twice as simple and quite as probable as any other. But the question was now, what was to be the end?

I started out on my search for Browne immediately after breakfast. Not finding him at home, I thought it probable he would be at Miss Hammill's, and thither accordingly I betook myself. But he was not there; and the servant who answered the bell told me that Miss Alice had been growing gradually worse, and that the doctor gave slight hopes of her ever recovering her mind. I have often wondered since whether she still wore the ring.

So all day long I wandered over New York, searching for my friend; but night closed in, and still I had not found him. The following afternoon, however, I got upon his track, and followed him from one point to another till I traced him to the Hudson River depot. Just before I reached there the eight P. M. express had left, carrying him a passenger in the sleeping-car. I heard the whistle of the engine as it rushed away, carrying many a soul on a longer journey than they had ever before undertaken: all the world has heard of the disaster of New Hamburg! Living or dead, I never saw my friend again, nor was his body ever, so far as I know, recovered. Doubtless it was better so: he never could have found life sweet on earth again. But often, in the evenings, as I sit before my fire, I think of him and of the gray, crumbling tombstone in Trinity Church-yard, and marvel that life should seem so simple and commonplace.

The Promissory Note.

[*After the Manner of Poe.*]

In the lonesome latter years,
(Fatal years!)
To the dropping of my tears
Danced the mad and mystic spheres
In a rounded, reeling rune,
'Neath the moon,
To the dripping and the dropping of my tears.

Ah, my soul is swathed in gloom,
(Ulalume!)
In a dim Titanic tomb,
For my gaunt and gloomy soul
Ponders o'er the penal scroll,
O'er the parchment (not a rhyme),
Out of place,—out of time,—
I am shredded, shorn, unshifty,
(O, the fifty!)
And the days have passed, the three,
Over me!
And the debit and the credit are as one to him and me.

'Twas the random runes I wrote
At the bottom of the note
(Wrote, and freely
Gave to Greeley),
In the middle of the night,
In the mellow, moonless night,
When the stars were out of sight,
When my pulses, like a knell,
(Israfel!)
Danced with dim and dying fays
O'er the ruins of my days,
O'er the dimless, timeless days,
When the fifty, drawn at thirty,
Seeming thrifty, yet the dirty
Lucre of the market, was the most that I could raise!

Fiends controlled it,
(Let him hold it!)
Devils held for me the inkstand and the pen;
Now the days of grace are o'er,
(Ah, Lenore!)
I am but as other men:
What is time, time, time,
To my rare and runic rhyme,
To my random, reeling rhyme,
By the sands along the shore,
Where the tempest whispers, "Pay him!" and I answer,
"Nevermore!"

Varieties.

A LEADING article—A locomotive.

A LEGAL CONVEYANCE—The prisoner's van.

SELF-MADE men are very apt to worship their maker.

TO KEEP potatoes from freezing, bake them for breakfast.

LEGAL MEM—The ancient Hebrews used to try cases by Jewry.

WHAT is the next thing to "killing no murder?" Sleighing time.

IF you are out in a driving storm, don't attempt to hold the rains.

THE singer who brought down the house has refused to rebuild it.

A YOUNG lady, recently betrothed, says that C. O. D. means Call on Dad.

WHEN there is a spanking breeze bad children should be put out to take the air.

HOW TO MAKE A HOT-BED—Put a candle near your pillow and read yourself to sleep.

AN old "settler"—The old lady who sent a farmer ten cents that had been due twenty-nine years.

A YOUNG lady sends this: How to prevent chappy cheeks—Have nothing to do with cheeky chaps.

A PROMINENT journalist has offered a reward of ten thousand dollars for a tale that will make his hair stand on end. He is entirely bald.

A CHICAGO clergyman having preached from the text "Where are the Nine?" the *Post* replies: "Most of them are with the Haymakers—and the rest have gone to grass."

AN ill-natured contemporary says Rhode Island goes for narrow guage railroads because she wants both rails to lie within her own territory.

"TELL the mistress that I have torn the curtain," said a gentleman lodger to a female domestic. "Very well, sir; mistress will put it down as rent."

McGEHAN, the alleged murderer of Tom Meyers, at Hamilton, O., one year ago, and who was recently acquitted at Dayton, received a warm reception on his return home, on Christmas day. During the afternoon, sensational handbills were posted through the city, inviting the people to meet at the court-house in the evening. A large meeting was held, at which resolutions were adopted denouncing judge, jury, and all in any way connected with the acquittal, and pointedly intimating to McGehan that it would conduce to his own health and happiness of Hamilton were he at once to seek a residence elsewhere.

A MAN in Keokuk county, Iowa, tried to drive a herd of cattle across the river, the other day. When the ice breaks up, they expect to find most of the animals.